The Library Trailblazers: A Satisfaction Survey Expedition

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Abstract

Within the ambit of libraries, library user education is a vital service that serves as a conduit for users to gain the fundamental skills and information needed for efficient information access, evaluation, and usage. Notably, guided library tours are an effective way to introduce new patrons to the library's wealth of resources and provide insightful advice on how to utilize them wisely. The primary objective of this survey was to assess the ability of 2965 newcomers to use the library services of the University of Kelaniya after taking part in a tour of the facility. It also aimed to determine how satisfied these beginners were overall with their guided library tour experience. A complex research strategy included qualitative and quantitative approaches in the quest for a complete understanding. The distribution of structured questionnaires using Google Form was used to collect data, and the outcome was the compilation of a sizeable dataset comprising 343 replies. The distribution of responses across faculties was as follows: The Faculty of Humanities attracted 87 responses (25.4%), the Faculty of Science attracted 81 responses (23.6%), the Faculty of Social Sciences attracted 78 responses (22.7%), and, proportionally, the Faculty of Computing and Technology contributed four responses (1.2%) via the Google Form. Both male and female students demonstrated unwavering pleasure with their library tour experiences across various faculties. In conclusion, this study's results unambiguously support the library-guided tour's effectiveness in providing newcomers with the necessary skills and information, as seen by their noticeably higher satisfaction ratings.

Keywords: Information Competency, Library User Education, Guided Library Tours, Skills Development, User Satisfaction

Introduction

Library user education is a critical and multifaceted service libraries provide to equip users with essential skills and knowledge for adequate information access and utilization. This abstract explores various dimensions of library user education, emphasizing its adaptability to diverse user communities and its role in promoting lifelong learning and critical thinking. One fundamental component of library user education is information literacy, which involves recognizing the need for information, locating relevant sources, evaluating their credibility, and effectively using the acquired information. Effective teaching methods and communication are vital in this context. (American Library Association, 2023; Walsh, 2011)

In the digital age, technical training has become increasingly important as users rely on technology for various purposes (Zhu & Tianhui, 2009). Libraries ensure users possess the skills to navigate technology confidently, including using specific software, online safety practices, and safeguarding personal information. Reader advisory services play a distinctive role in helping users discover materials aligned with their interests and needs. This includes personalized book recommendations, curated reading lists, and literary activities like book clubs (Trott, 2009).

Research support is another crucial aspect of library user education, assisting users in complex research endeavors (Hensley et al., 2014). This can involve one-on-one consultations with librarians, research skills workshops, and citation management software guidance. Digital literacy education has gained prominence in the digital landscape, with libraries educating users on effective digital resource utilization, source evaluation, and online privacy and security (Mulat and Natarajan, 2020)

Library orientation is essential for introducing new users to library resources and policies. Online orientation has become increasingly important to cater to the growing reliance on digital resources (Alperin et al., 2020). Online guides and tutorials are essential in this context. Dynamic and interactive library tours offer an engaging means of introducing users to library services, collections, and policies, helping users feel comfortable and informed about library resources (Reed & Miller, 2020; Chiya et al., 2022).

In conclusion, library user education is a cornerstone of library services, aiming to empower users with skills for adequate information access and utilization. By providing diverse programs, libraries can meet the unique needs of their users while fostering lifelong learning and critical thinking skills.

Problem Statement

The University of Kelaniya Library has implemented comprehensive library orientation programs to cater to the needs of new students, commonly referred to as "freshers." During these events, the librarian delivers the initial library orientation lecture, while faculty librarians organize primary and supplementary workshops tailored to specific faculties. The Reader Service Division and Subject Liasion Library Service librarians also collaborate to create Guided Library Tours, introducing the library's facilities and services.

Significant changes were implemented to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the guided library tour technique. The primary objective was to furnish users with information about the library and its services, ultimately enhancing user efficiency by streamlining processes and incorporating digital technologies to optimize the library tour

experience and save users' valuable time. To boost demand for our library tours and disseminate information among users, a Google form was utilized for user registration on a first-come, first-served basis. This initiative aimed to reduce the user registration queue and alleviate the workload of library staff. Before the tour, all user information was seamlessly integrated into the library administration system.

The main challenge lay in assessing whether the alterations to the library tour process effectively met the desired level of reader satisfaction. Simultaneously, efforts were made to ascertain whether the library tours adequately imparted a comprehensive understanding of the library's operations and the full spectrum of services available to readers.

Objectives

During the academic year 2021/2022, the central library conducted a guided library tour as an integral component of the orientation program. Post-tour, we aimed to appraise newcomers' skills and gauge their satisfaction. The survey objected to:

- Assess newcomers' proficiency in utilizing library services after the tour.

- Gauge newcomers' overall satisfaction with the library tour.

- Solicit user feedback and comments regarding the library tour.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a mixed-method approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research population consisted of 2965 students who took part in a guided library tour. Utilizing SurveyMonkey's sample size calculator, the recommended sample size

was 341 students. However, a structured Google Form distributed via institutional emails received 343 responses. The survey instrument primarily gathered quantitative data and included open-ended questions for qualitative insights. Data from the newcomers who participated in the library tour were collected using a structured questionnaire via Google Form, and analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 26.

Significant of the Study

The survey findings hold significance for all individuals engaged in reader services, providing valuable insights for the planning, execution, and evaluation of future library tours. This study aimed to evaluate newcomers' post-tour abilities in utilizing library services and measure their overall satisfaction with the tour.

Results and Discussion

Responses

The amassed data encompassed a total of 343 responses; in terms of faculty distribution, participation was as follows: Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies garnered 93 responses (27.1%), the Faculty of Humanities saw 87 responses (25.4%), the Faculty of Science received 81 responses (23.6%), Faculty of Social Sciences collected 78 responses (22.7%), and lastly, the Faculty of Computing and Technology accounted for four responses (1.2%) via the Google Form.
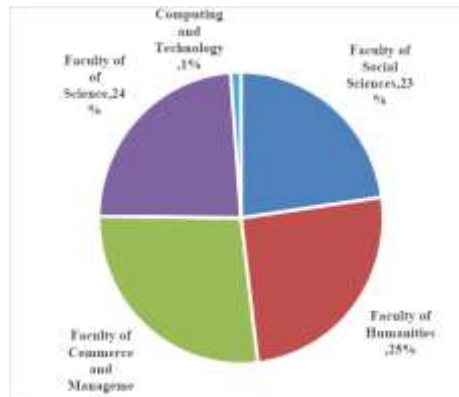
Figure 1: Responses of the study by faculty

Encompassing participation from all academic faculties. Among these, 97 responses (28.3%) were from male students, while 246 (71.7%) were provided by their female counterparts via the Google form.

Abilities that they have taken after the library tour

The survey assessed newcomers' competence in utilizing library services after the tour. Essential abilities, specifically chosen to be acquired by participants through library tours, were employed as benchmarks to analyze newcomers' proficiencies.

Figure 2: Abilities after the library tour

Note: 1 Strongly Agree, 2 Agree, 3 Neutral, 4 Disagree, 5 Strongly Disagree

In this study, individuals demonstrated adept navigation of the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), employing criteria such as author and title to locate diverse library materials. Their skillful use of information sources supported research and assignments. They effectively identified relevant databases aligned with their research themes and applied filters for efficient database search results. Participants also distinguished between library databases and internet search engines. They showcased proficiency in borrowing limits, reference materials, and optimizing textbooks. Additionally, they exhibited a strong understanding of conventional and electronic journals, research theses, and rare books, showcasing expertise in academic information retrieval.

Satisfaction with the library tour

The survey assessed the satisfaction of newcomers with library tours. Findings revealed that newcomers were pleased with well-organized and informative tours, starting promptly and led by engaging presenters. The tours effectively introduced library resources, services, and study areas, enhancing participants' understanding. Overall, satisfaction with the tours increased among participants.

Table 1: satisfaction with the library tour

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
SatisfactionMean	343	1.4922	.76625

Note: 1 Strongly Satisfy, 2 Satisfy, 3 Neutral, 4 Dissatisfy, 5 Strongly Dissatisfy

The mean score for Satisfaction with the guided library tour test is 1.4922, with a standard deviation of 0.76625 (M=1.4922; SD=0.76625).

Feedback and Suggestions

Participants overwhelmingly praised the guided library tour based on their feedback, describing it as exceptional, highly valuable, informative, engaging, and well-organized. They also provided constructive suggestions, including enhancing participant facilities, reducing time constraints, shortening the overall duration, and incorporating more hands-on activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conducting guided library tours is essential for introducing newcomers to library services and resources. This study emphasizes the tour's key components, including an introduction to library facilities, services, circulation policies, and database usage. Participants showcased various skills, such as OPAC navigation, accessing research resources, and database selection.

Survey results demonstrated exceptionally high satisfaction with the library tour, encompassing session quality, punctuality, engaging lectures, information clarity, facility comprehension, and technical tool utilization. Notably, satisfaction levels did not significantly differ across genders or faculties.

In conclusion, newcomers gained valuable skills through the guided library tour, with high satisfaction levels. This study encourages

continuous improvement based on user feedback, rectifying previous flaws and enhancing tour efficiency.

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